

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #68

SEINE FISHERIES: PWSAC reached their pink salmon eggtake goals at WNH and AFK on September 3, and September 4, respectively. Through September 8, PWSAC reports eggtake progress of 45% towards the final goal at CCH. PWSAC estimated a surplus of 100,000 to 150,000 pink salmon in the AFK HEEZ on September 4, and has provided area recommendations for a pink salmon cleanup fishery. PWSAC estimated a surplus of 140,000 to 160,000 pink salmon in the WNH HEEZ on September 6 that will go unharvested. PWSAC has expressed concerns regarding eggtake progress at CCH, which has led to area restrictions in Unakwik Inlet.

Harvest reporting indicates that fewer than 75,000 pink salmon have been harvested in PWS since August 28. Cumulative pink salmon harvest totals for Prince William Sound **through September 7** include approximately 1.8 million VFDA cost recovery fish, 1.7 million PWSAC cost recovery fish, and an estimated 85.8 million CPF fish.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 12-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10; Wednesday, September 11; Thursday, September 12; and, Friday, September 13. **Waters of Port Valdez inside of a line from the brown oil boom container van located between Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Allison Point, along the yellow SERV'S buoys around Solomon Gulch Hatchery to the brown oil boom container east of the hatchery between VFDA and PetroStar will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods.** All waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor will be closed to commercial fishing. Waters within 200 yards of the AMHS Valdez Ferry Terminal will also be closed to commercial fishing when the ferry is arriving and departing. Waters within the Alyeska Marine Terminal (Trans Alaska Pipeline System) Security Zone are closed to commercial fishing. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect during these fishing periods. Harvest estimates in Valdez Arm and Port Valdez since September 3 include 132,000 coho salmon.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding the Cannery Creek Subdistrict, CCH THA, and CCH SHA,** will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 12-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10; Wednesday, September 11; Thursday, September 12; and, Friday, September 13. Time and area for future fishing opportunity in hatchery subdistricts will be dependent upon eggtake progress, and escapement at CCH.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 12-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10; Wednesday, September 11; Thursday, September 12; and, Friday, September 13.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 12-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10; Wednesday, September 11; Thursday, September 12; and, Friday, September 13. **Waters of the AFK SHA west and south of a line from 60° 03.100' N. lat., 148° 04.023' W. long. to 60° 03.042' N. lat., 148° 03.969' W. long. will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods to provide protection for hatchery equipment.**

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 12-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10; Wednesday, September 11; Thursday, September 12; and, Friday, September 13.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 12-hour periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 10; Wednesday, September 11; Thursday, September 12; and, Friday, September 13.

The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Wednesday, September 11.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time in season either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, in season harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing.

However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16 U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.